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A
L E T T E R
TO
MR. WILBERFORCE.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]



AN
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
STATE OF THE PUBLIC MIND
AMONGST THE
LOWER CLASSES:
AND ON THE
MEANS OF TURNING IT TO THE WELFARE OF
THE STATE.

IN A
LETTER TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ. M. P.

STAVA BENE, MA PER STAR MEGLIO,
SIO QUI.

^K
BY ARTHUR YOUNG, ESQ. F. R. S.

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M.DCC.XCVIII.

AN
ENQUIRY

INTO THE
STATE OF THE PUBLIC MIND

IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY



AN

ENQUIRY, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I WAS so well persuaded of the good effects likely to arise from your Address to the higher classes of this kingdom, that I read it with the greatest pleasure ; afterwards I examined it with views of a more private nature :—
Consolation in sorrow, I sought and found in it ; and I hope and trust the benefit has been great to that portion of the community which came within the sphere of your observations. I wish sincerely, that a book written with equal ability, and as sound in doctrine, were addressed to the lower classes. Even upon them, however, your admirable performance will have a reflected influence ; for it is impossible to meliorate the examples they are likely to follow, without at the same time improving the copy.

Within the three last years, I have travelled slowly and deliberately above three thousand miles

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in England, and have consequently had many opportunities of examining the state of the PUBLIC MIND amongst farmers, labourers, manufacturers, artizans, and the other poorer classes: uniting this range of remark with not an unobserving winter's residence in London, to which I am called by my duty at a public board; I have had, upon the whole, opportunities to draw from the general view, some conclusions, upon which I think you will not be offended, if, under the sanction of your name, I make a few rapid remarks. To attempt a fuller elucidation of such subjects, would not become me; but it would be the omission of a duty which every man owes to the community in which he lives, to forbear from suggesting them to the consideration of abler heads, which may thus be enabled more deliberately to work upon the materials my more extensive means of information shall have supplied.

The state of the Public Mind among the middling and lower classes, has by some persons been mentioned, with a reference to what it ought to be upon rational principles: the blessings enjoyed by our people, compared with the miseries of other nations, are well known only by those who read with judgment, or travel with intelligence. The result of such a comparison, made by men thus enlightened, is too readily supposed

supposed to be congenial with those feelings in the people, which not only ought to be, but actually are, produced by their situation in life.—The people *ought* to think thus—therefore they *must* think thus: the fact is taken for granted, because in reason it ought to exist.

But all such conclusions will appear premature, to those to whom, long experience has proved the joint result of ignorance, and of that perverseness which is perhaps natural to humanity. Man is endowed with reason; but how often are his actions irrational: he is selfish and interested, yet how weakly does he pursue his real interest! With powers to look through the shades of error, how clouded by prejudice, how easily deceived by sophistry and delusion. Seeing this amongst the higher orders of the people of our own country, why should we deem our lower classes exempted from the same mistakes?—In fact, the lower classes are liable to them in a still greater measure. Unconscious, because ignorant, of their comparative happiness, they listen but too readily to the insidious tale, which, turning their eye from every pleasing object of their situation, directs it to blemishes alone, and often points out as resulting from political institutions, evils which flow but too naturally from the depravity of man.

No society can, nor ever did exist, without the distinctions of rich and poor. Equality is a romantic phantom of the imagination, never realized, and where most talked of, as in France under the new order of things, it is least found.

Every where, while the world endures, the rich will be the purchasers of the labour of the poor. To be forced to labour for life, may appear, speculatively considered, to be a moral evil; but an evil no more to be banished from political communities than sickness or death. Whatever the degree of this evil, it may, by the provisions of a wise and humane government, be rendered as light as is compatible with human affairs, and as easy to the lowest classes as the distinction between wealth and poverty admits. In England this evil has been gradually lessened, and no session of Parliament passes without laws for still further improvements in the situation of the lower classes. Compared with the poor of all other countries, their station is that of ease and comfort, and they would in every event remain quiet and contented, were it not the interest of persons in higher stations to take the kind trouble of convincing them that they are unhappy.

From the moment that revolutionary doctrines are disseminated amongst them, the state of
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their minds must depend on the degree of their knowledge and information. If they knew what had been the result of carrying such tenets into practice in other countries, they would find no difficulty in deciding. If they were acquainted with the poverty, beggary, and ruin which a succession of revolutions had brought on France, Flanders, Holland, and Italy, they would tremble at the thoughts of discontent: but their situation forbids such intelligence, precludes such knowledge, unglossed by jacobinical varnish. If they resort to an ale-house kitchen to hear a newspaper read, they have the probable chance of swallowing the poison of seditious prints in the pay of the French government, and becoming pupils in the doctrines of the *Rights of Man*. Thus tutored, it would be strange if numbers were not rendered discontented, and fit objects to be further wrought on by those revolutionary spirits who are incessantly plotting the works of darkness.

I know the common topics which are urged in answer to these statements—I know how sanguine many are, how prompt to believe that things are as they wish them to be: but let us not forget, that not one of those obnoxious societies who promote what they call reform, has ceased its meetings; and that it is a boast, that the

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Corresponding Society has at present 100,000 members. I do not conceive them to be less dangerous, because more silent and cautious under the operation of those Acts of Parliament, which made *resistance a question of prudence*, though not of morality.

—————*Incedimus per ignes
Suppositos cineri doloso.*

Sorry I am to be compelled, upon the whole, to the avowal, but the truth is, that I have had abundant opportunity of seeing much discontent amongst those men who ought to have imbibed very different sentiments.

Let us reflect on the industry with which PAINE's writings have been circulated through the kingdom—consider the tendency of multitudes of other pamphlets that have been almost equally distributed—of incessant paragraphs in the jacobin papers, which find their way into the kitchens of so many ale and pot-houses. Add to this dissemination of treason and sedition, the conspiracies of the *Illuminées*, with the political discontents of so many sectaries, their religious prejudices sharpening their political hostility to government—Join to all the rest, that more general discontent which will ever attend the necessary burthens of war.

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To this mass of mischiefs, superadd the admiration of the French revolution, professed and persisted in by so many great, and so many able men—the radical reforms called for—equality trumpeted—the sovereignty of the people—and all the similar insanity of men satiated with blessings; fatigued with political happiness; tired of property, and sickening of prosperity—the sentiments descending from class to class, till from the duke they reach the link-boy—Heap together all these causes of mischief, urged with such strenuousness—propagated with such industry—disguised with such art—and disseminated with such indefatigable exertions; presented in a thousand forms to the attention of classes who are devoid of skill to disentangle duplicity, unprepared with any antidote to repel such poison—classes, above all, whose minds are not strengthened with those sound and wholesome notions of their duty to God and their governors, which the Gospel inspires—and then let it finally be asked what, probably, *is the State of the Public Mind amongst many of the lower classes?*

I have as high an opinion as any man, of the national character of the English poor; and I can reflect how that character had gradually, perhaps to the moment of the French revolution, been improving by that generous system of unrivalled

rivalled freedom which this nation has long enjoyed. But I know also, the change, so hostile to humanity, which has taken place in all free countries since that event. We know the goodness of our people's character; but we know also, on the one hand, the infinite pains that have been taken to corrupt them; and on the other, what a blank is presented to us, when we demand what has been done * by the legislature, to oppose that torrent of atheism, deism, irreligion, and contempt of all duties, human and divine, which has pervaded the nation like a pestilence.

Consider the case of Switzerland ||, for it is an instance dreadfully in point. The Swiss were a good

* Blasphemy, sedition, treason, distributed for a penny : their antidotes for a shilling, or half a crown.

|| One of the most singular and atrocious circumstances in the conduct of France, has been her treatment of the powers who have had confidence enough in her declarations to make peace with her. The GRAND DUKE of TUSCANY found at Leghorn the good faith of the republic. The powers of Lombardy, regal, ducal, and republican, have been treated with the same perfidy and contempt. The Sovereign Pontiff gave his pictures by treaty to one French general, and is driven from his capital, a vagabond, by another. Belgium and Holland were conquered; the French were not forced, therefore, to any compact, but their conquest was facilitated by their engagements and promises, which have been trampled under feet with a profligacy that is notorious. The treatment of their
friends

good people, and loved their country to a proverb. Reflect on their situation; and ask if they ought not to have loved their government? They paid no taxes, and were free from oppression. I would not indeed compare their situation with that of the subjects of England, because I am convinced, that in what regards the poor, no government upon earth is equal to our own; and I have no doubt but a bailiff of the canton of Berne was more feared by his neighbours than GEORGE III. is at Windsor. More, did I say? Our King lives amidst his people, like a father or a brother; and who could shew the man, poor or rich, in that neighbourhood, who could assert that he ever felt the vicinity of his Sovereign to be that of an oppressor?—to be that of any thing but a benefactor and a friend! Unrivalled, however, as our government is, taxes are high, and in Switzerland they were nothing. It is a contrast not undeserving the notice of those writers and orators who call for reforms. In the centre of Europe, and surrounded by great powers, which were

friends in Holland has been curious, and a capital lesson to English reformers. But above all, Switzerland is a proof of the consequence of their amity!!! When, therefore, we hear of their threatening destruction to Britain, because she dares continue the war, let us bear in our minds the dispensations of their fraternity!

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almost perpetually belligerent, the Swiss were preserved in perpetual peace. Hear this, ye jacobins, who urge the war as the cause of every discontent! Were the Swiss therefore contented?—No taxes—no war; and what has been the consequence? The discontents of but a small part of the people, instigated by France, have ruined their country; and it is becoming a province—an offset of equality and the Rights of Man.

If Switzerland is insufficient, turn your eyes to Ireland, and see a peasantry frantic with discontent, yet without the power of stating a single grievance; involving their country in anarchy, and cutting throats, they know not for what: favours accumulated upon them, yet producing no other effect than darkening the shades of discontent, and sharpening the daggers ready to be plunged into the hearts of their benefactors. With such a picture of human depravity their leaders call for *reform*, and nothing further from their meaning than that of their own profligate hearts.

These striking facts furnish matter which, if pursued, would be inexhaustible in reflection. The new lights, as they are called, the new philosophy, has taken root, and worked its effects in countries, in proportion to their freedom: in other words,
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the people have been rendered discontented in an inverse ratio to the cause of discontent. A dreadful lesson this ! Let it be contemplated in time : it should banish all false security ; it should fix a bayonet firmly in the gripe of every man who has property to defend. “ *The Swiss are wise ; they are peaceable ; they would not join the coalition.* ” — This we have heard, by way of satire on the government of England. We now see what is the security afforded by peace with revolutionized France : the case is a strong one, and enables us to appreciate both war and peace with the *republic one and indivisible.*

Liberty, in all its degrees, brings with it a certain proportion of light and knowledge. These may be turned to a good, or to a miserable use : they may be blessings, or the heaviest of curses : they may diffuse the Bible and your Practical View : they may disseminate TOM PAINE and the *Morning Chronicle*. And though the press was not free in Switzerland, for it is free no where but in England, and least of all in France, yet seditious prints would enter proportionably to the freedom of the country. Horrible as French principles are, they might be counteracted, were government as anxious in preserving, as jacobins are sedulous in poisoning, the minds of the

people. But the Swiss government*, like our own, trusted to *the good disposition of their subjects—to the mildness of their administration; and to the manifold blessings enjoyed by their people: their rulers knew that the people ought to be contented, and therefore hoped that they were so.*—But the public mind had been corrupted by France: We now see the consequence. Let us meditate well on this fearful example, and reflect in time, that while French principles are afloat, a licentious press must in the long run overthrow the best governments much sooner than the worst. The attack is insidious, reiterated, incessant, perpetual. The best intentions are vilified; the best actions traduced; the wisest systems ridiculed; the basest falsehoods dressed in the garb of truth; and the freest government that ever blessed mankind, represented as the vilest of tyrannies: All this, amid the most ardent panegyrics of the system of France, which is called the *emancipation of the human race—the perfectibility of mind*, and all that jargon that has been invented to varnish over anarchy, and the destruction of every divine and human law, which has

* I know the misrepresentations of some late travellers, who would make us believe the Swiss were oppressed, admitting at the same time that all the people were armed, and in some measure disciplined: a manifest contradiction.

founded the happiness and reared the greatness of Britain.

A distinction is doubtless to be made between positive disaffection to the legislature, and the workings of evil suggestions in minds ill informed. Yet it must be confessed, that there are many, and especially in great cities, who have been corrupted enough to wish for any revolution; who, being both poor and profligate, would consider any change as for the better. But the more general mischief, is that of gradually imbibing discontent, and thereby having the affection weakened, which would be inherent in their uncontaminated bosoms. But well ought they to be instructed in the almost incalculable, and to them, incredible sums which they receive in the payment of their labour, and in the receipt of legal and voluntary charity. I have calculated, and with some attention, the amount of what is paid for *labour* of all sorts in England; and it is not, probably, less than one hundred millions sterling — poor-rates, and charities of every sort, cannot amount to less than seven millions. Add to this, the income (to the lower classes) derived from the amount of our taxes, so large a part of which, by far the greatest part, is swallowed up by those classes, and it will be a very moderate calculation to estimate, that a revolution

volution in this country, through French assistance, would annihilate a greater mass of income than is enjoyed by all France, in this moment of her triumphs abroad and misery at home*.—What would become of the innumerable poor, as they are called, who live at present by that income? They would tug the oar, and march in the ranks of their new masters, to carry desolation into the rest of unsubdued Europe—the slaves and beasts of burthen of those who came to them under the guise of *friends*. Pride, malice and revenge, would be gratified for the moment in some—to be atoned for, not remedied, by a long, dreary, hopeless repentance.

Without doubt, there are men ignorant enough to suppose that the wealth would remain, with only a change of hands; and that the designs of France are not against the people, but the government alone. Were that the case, the French would be lukewarm friends indeed.—No. The object of our foe is the ruin of England, that the manufactures, commerce, and prosperity of France may rise by the depression of her rival. Above seventy millions of manufacturing and

* The assertion may seem bold, but I could support it by facts that would be deemed conclusive, in a case where certainty is unattainable.

commercial labour would vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision; it would go where the industry of France is gone. Cultivation would to a degree remain; but with starving and revolutionary consumers, what would be the amount? The present poor-rates probably equal what would then be the rental of the kingdom; for we should suffer more than France has done, proportionably to the superiority of our manufactures and commerce, compared with our agriculture. Such numbers without work must starve, or fight the enemies of France, or subsist by plunder: probably all three. Hence then, of all the classes of a state, none would suffer more by a revolution than the labouring poor, except it be the great landlords and the clergy. These are facts susceptible of demonstration: what then is the care that has been exerted by government to have them clearly impressed on the minds of the people?

When it is considered that it is the undoubted and genuine interest of all the lower classes to keep things as they are, because every change must be for the worse—when we further reflect, that if christianity be not a fable, their eternal welfare is at stake, to what causes can we attribute the discontents which certainly have existence? The *political* cause I have explained—but
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there is another which demands great attention.

You, Sir, in your luminous *Practical Enquiry*; the Bishop of LANDAFF, in his excellent *Address*; and Mr. BOWDLER, in a late meritorious publication, call equally on the people of this realm to reform themselves, by paying that attention to the worship of God, and the care of their Souls, which such important concerns undoubtedly claim; nor can so excellent a design be too highly commended. But has it been sufficiently considered, that you call on the people to do what very many of them have no power to perform? You call on them to act in conformity to that religious instruction, which you seem to think they at least *may* receive. But this is not the case. The subject is of such importance to the whole community, that I venture out of the common path of my pursuits, to state a few observations on the present state of public worship amongst the lower classes of this metropolis. A very short space will give its contents; for in fact, there is scarcely any such thing: and the great evil I shall complain of is, that as our churches are arranged at present, THERE CAN BE NO SUCH THING.

I have attended divine service in many of them with this particular view; and it has afforded

ed a subject of melancholy reflection, to see nearly their whole space occupied by pews, to which the poor have no admittance : the aisles in many so narrow, as to contain very few, compared with the population of this great city, and none commodiously. In some churches, few or no benches to sit on, and no mats to kneel on. A stranger would think that our churches were built, as indeed they are, only for the rich. Under such an arrangement, where are the lower classes to hear the word of God—that gospel, which in our Saviour's time on earth, was *preached* more peculiarly *to the Poor*?—Where are they to learn the doctrines of that truly excellent religion which exhorts to content, and to submission to the higher powers?—Doctrines the most admirably adapted to inspire that content, and to render that submission satisfactory, and even comfortable to the distressed. Has it been held, that the religious instruction *of the people* is a matter of small importance? By no means. Every real politician in Europe has admitted the contrary; and its importance was never so clearly to be recognized as it has been throughout the progress of that revolution which now threatens the overthrow of every thing respectable in Europe: for it ought never to be absent from our minds, that it has been reared on the basis of irreligion: That the most active and sedulous in-

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dustury to undermine, ridicule, and bring into contempt, the worship of God, and even the belief in His existence, has preceded the introduction of the modern political principles of France, wherever they have taken root. No man in his senses can doubt the political ability with which those principles have been disseminated, or the talents with which they have been rendered so dreadfully triumphant. While, therefore, our political enemies shew, by a conduct resulting from deep reflection, how opposite to their schemes the holy religion is which we profess, is it not equally incumbent on us to exert every nerve to promote, to strengthen, to establish it on the surest foundations which it is permitted to human wisdom to lay? and is not the legislature of the kingdom called on to make such exertions as they alone can make, that every individual in the community may at least have the power of hearing that gospel preached, which our enemies know is our security, and at the destruction of which they therefore point all their energy.

Modern philosophy is the scourge of human societies; religion their best support. But call not the people of this great city to hear the lessons of religion, while you nearly exclude them from the temples of her worship. The poor are every where ten times more numerous than
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the higher classes : but measure the space occupied by the pews and by the aisles. Reflect on the convenience and comfort of sitting, and of kneeling on cushions, and compare it with standing on a pavement insufficient to contain an hundredth part of those who, for any thing we know to the contrary, would attend the public worship if they could be seated with decency.

Can the poor build churches? If they are built at the expence of the State, they have a right to a provision for their worship. For what do such enormous piles as St. Paul's and the Abbey, and the numerous steeples of insufficient edifices, rear their bulk, if the inhabitants of every class around, can find no spot in which to kneel to the Father of Mercies? Hospitals for the diseases of the body have been built, and endowed with a generous profusion: do we see no *diseases of the soul* amongst the poor, that demand a similar attention? Or, can no storm ever come that shall distinguish, by the dreadful test of public confusion, the pious christian from the frenchified disciple of Satan?

The evil well ascertained, the cure is obvious: build new churches in those parts of the town where the poor are most numerous. Let them be in the form of a theatre; the whole area oc-

cupied by benches for the poor, with thick mats to kneel upon; and for the higher classes, ranges of galleries, or boxes, contrived for hearing distinctly: both should assemble in the same church, or they probably would not be well attended; and were the doctrines preached to them adapted solely to themselves, they might be jealous of the application. By a passage in *St. James*, it appears that the evil I complain of, is almost as old as christianity itself: "My brethren have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect to persons: for if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man, in vile raiment, and ye have respect for him that weareth the gay cloathing, and say unto him, *sit thou here in a good place*; and say to the poor man, *stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool*; are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" This is just the conduct that is practised at present to the whole body of the poor: to the rich, *enter your pews, be seated on your velvet, and kneel on your cushions*;—but to the poor, *stand thou on the cold pavement, without seat, and without a mat to kneel on*.

Do more than build: provide preachers who shall inculcate the vital christianity of the church of England; for that alone can administer true comfort

comfort to the miserable, the distressed, the poor. The fine sermons so often heard upon morals, not being firmly rooted in the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, are ill adapted to the lower classes; the passions are too powerful for such persuasives: but vital christianity is formed for interesting the heart, and dispensing consolation to evils, over which mere morality idly plays.

The service might be performed four times every Sunday; and if the churches were as well contrived for receiving sinners to be rendered penitent, as theatres are for collecting them for other purposes, thousands might, and would resort to them*.

Methinks I hear it said, is this time of assessments and taxes, and subscriptions, the moment for building churches? Yes: peculiarly so. The right moment to attempt a reform of the public mind, is that in which most energy is employed to corrupt it. What is the object of these taxes and assessments, but security against the foe

* Thin congregations, whether in town or country, are always the fault of the clergy. I have never heard a really good impressive preacher, who delivered the doctrines of the gospel, and not those of so many modern divines, and who seemed truly to feel the truth and importance of what he uttered, without finding a numerous and attentive assembly.

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of our liberty and our religion? We have an enemy that attacks the worship of the Almighty more eagerly than he attacks the *Royal Sovereign* or the *Queen Charlotte*. His design is deep—he knows the result. And are we to be animated in the defence of our earth, our brick and mortar, or our guineas; and not zealous to protect the right of praying in security to the merciful God who has hitherto protected us? Shall we go in crowds to subscribe for building a ship, or paying a regiment; and shall we not be as desirous of contributing to *another security*, the great basis of every other! The mere hull of a single 74 would build two churches; which, in the course of a year, might carry the gospel doctrine of content, and of submission to legal authority, to the hearts of many thousands at present debased, profligate, and ready for every mischief. By urging this motive foremost, I speak to the feelings of the infidels, deists, and *nominal* christians of this luxurious age; but by real christians, no other motive would be required, than the love of God and of their Redeemer, that first of duties, and the desire of doing all to the glory of their Supreme Benefactor. But to both these descriptions of men I might put the question, Is not this raising regiments? It is converting a foe into a friend—it is ways and means—supply—support—allies—preparation—defence—resource!

source!—It is laying our foundations deep—it is building on a rock. The corruption and irreligion of the public mind can alone destroy us. Let us then attack the malady in the source, and provide for a cure—not a palliative, but a *radical reform*.

Genuine christianity is inconsistent with revolt, or with discontent in the midst of plenty. The true christian will never be a leveller; will never listen to French politics, or to French philosophy. He who worships God in spirit and in truth, will love the government and the laws which protect him, without asking by whom they are administered. But let it not be imagined that such characters will abound amongst the lower classes, while the higher, by their Sunday parties, excursions, amusements, and vanities; by their neglect of public worship, and of their families, shew that they feel not themselves, what perhaps they talk of, or recommend for the poor. It is a revolting contradiction, to hear men rail at jacobinism on a Saturday, and pass their Sunday any where but at church; filling the day which God and the laws require to be kept holy, with the dissipation of parties—the routine of common pursuits—the inanity of lifeless converse, or the satiety of never-ending pleasure. But this is a point upon which you have
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expatiated with such truth and eloquence, that if it is not felt, we have reason for the deepest apprehensions. A better example must be generally set by the highest classes, or churches would be built, and CECILS preach in vain.

As it would be improper, in so slight a sketch as this, and indeed much beyond my talents, to do more than point out the evil, and hint the remedy, I shall proceed to mention one other evil, which has indeed drawn forth the animadversions of some other writers. It is the neglect of the clergy, in not residing on their livings. This is very general, and, as I conceive, very mischievous.

It may indeed be urged, that residence universally enforced, would be a benefit only in proportion to the accidental superiority of the character of a rector, on comparison with that of his curate; and I will admit, that in many cases a parish might lose considerably by exchanging their curate for their rector; and also the case is much stronger, when a rector uses his residence as the means of taking his tithes in kind. When that is done, a curate would be more likely to have a due degree of influence with the flock, and to be heard with attention and profit, than the pastor, who is considered too often in the
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light of an enemy and oppressor. But the evil of which I principally complain, is the non-residence of both rectors and curates; and this evil unhappily is very common also.

A man must have travelled very little in this kingdom, who does not know that country towns abound with curates who never see the parishes they serve, but when they are absolutely forced to it by duty: that several parishes are often served by the same person, who, in order to double or treble his curacy, hurries through the service in a manner perfectly indecent; strides from the pulpit to his horse, and gallops away as if pursuing a fox. Burials and other solemnities are performed in the same manner; and reluctant will be the attendance on the sick, when six or eight miles are to be travelled. But where, under such circumstances, can be found that attention to the morals of the parishioners; that friendly advice; that adaptation of discourses to the circumstances of his people, of whom he knows nothing—the encouragement and consolation—the solicitude for the eternal welfare of the souls committed to his charge, which a resident clergyman *may* exert, but which an absent one *cannot*? What more necessary to the decency of a parish, to the establishment in it of vital religion, and of good morals, than to have a clergyman resident, rather than

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that the whole society should be left to consist of nothing but farmers and ale-house keepers, and the poor. A clergyman may not be the character he ought to be, but he must be bad indeed, if his presence is not attended with some effect, in civilizing the manners and improving the conduct of the parish. I know nothing more effective in rendering the people of a village decent and orderly, than the residence of a respectable clergyman: and where are such clergymen most likely to be found? Amidst their flocks, or fluttering in the idle dissipation of a town? Residence therefore acts reciprocally; it makes the clergyman a better man, and he makes his people better christians. I am well acquainted with many parts of this kingdom; and know that this is the fact. I have remarked, and been informed of a manifest difference in the morals of parishes where clergymen are resident, from those of other villages where none are to be found.

Nor is it only in this point of residence that reform is greatly wanting. Sorry I am to observe, that the conduct of many clergymen is most fatally in unison with the deep designs of an enemy that equally attacks our government and our church. For a country clergyman to spend the morning in fox-hunting, without the pretence of health; and the evening in every sort of dissipation—these are
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not the features of a useful parish priest. Much more scandalous is the spectacle—not uncommon—of others sauntering among the women of the town in the lobby of a play-house. Such are not men to turn the adverse current of the public mind from equality to contentment—from profligacy to morals—from irreligion to piety. These will never so impress the gospel by their doctrines, and adorn it by their lives, as to build the present prosperity of their country on the rock of future salvation. It is more proper to touch lightly on such subjects than to dwell on them. If the bishops have not due power to controul, it ought to be given without delay.

The system of our moral police seems to be as bad as that of our religious discipline, or we should not see, in addition to such evils, others permitted to march in union with them, and even nursed as objects of revenue.

It would be taking up too much of your time, were I to add to this paper, the observations I have made on the effect which ale-houses have upon the morals of the people. If those who have the management of the public treasure could possibly know, or had materials on which to calculate, the loss which *the general revenue* of the State suffers by the small comparative sums produced

duced by licenses, they would raise the annual sum paid for a license, so high as to shut up half the public-houses at least, which are now open in the kingdom. The difference between parishes abounding with ale-houses, and those which have none, is great to an incalculable amount, in point of industry, of moral conduct, sobriety, attendance on divine service; above all, in point of family comfort, and eventually, of population; and as a consequence of the whole, in point of habitual contentment, submission and attachment to the government under which they live. It is an observation which has been repeated to me in every part of the kingdom, and such variety of instances given, all tending to the same result, that the fact is established beyond controversy. But enquiries of this sort are unnecessary; multiplied ale-houses are multiplied temptations; and many—many are the wives of labourers, who have had to regret the bitter consequences of their husbands having to pass by the door of one of these resorts of idleness, on his return from his daily work; while the wives of others have continued to experience the happy effect of their partner's employment lying out of the way of this mischievous allurements.

If it be said, that were licensed ale-houses abolished, unlicensed ones would be opened, the assertion,

sertion, it may be replied, is contradicted by thousands of facts. In truth, the premium on these is great enough at present; yet where fewest are licensed, there are to be found all the happy effects I have described on manners, industry, and morals.

To go upon the system of filling an exchequer by licenses, is to build revenue on the ruin of morals. It is to establish public security on disaffection to government—it is to hold out a jacobin paper as a rival to the parson's sermon—it is to consider industry as useless, and sobriety as a national loss. The finances that are levied on such principles, will not flourish long, nor do they deserve prosperity.

For ages, the inattention of the legislature to these and similar abuses, produced effects only on the welfare of individuals. The case is far different at present. The very existence of the kingdom, as an independent country—the privilege of possessing the gospel and the free worship of the Divine Author of all things—are now at stake. The nation is undone, if such abuses are not corrected. Whatever strikes at the religion of the common people, tends to level in the dust all for which life is desirable. With a licentious press, vomiting out daily the atheistical tenets of jacobins,

bins, and multitudes employed in the distribution; religion must be supported by new energies—by a conduct as novel as the attacks of our enemies, or all is lost. It is a preposterous folly, to suppose that a people thoroughly corrupted in the vital sources of obedience, are to be controuled by the routine of a relaxed discipline, within sight of France—perhaps mingled with every thing French, by the effects of an insidious truce.

This is perhaps the place in which it may be proper to notice a cause of irreligion generally operating in this kingdom—I mean the immense wealth and temporal prosperity which are diffused through every class of the community, and of which even the lowest largely partake. You, Sir, have well explained the effect upon the higher orders *: that effect has spread wherever wealth has been disseminated; and however melancholy the reflection, it is but too true, that worldly prosperity has a sure tendency to blind the understanding to the dictates, and harden the heart against the feelings, of a religion which numbers

* Not a little indebted is the community to the Bishop of DURHAM, for entering his caveat publicly against the luxuriant exhibitions of the theatre; which, if no checks were given, might arrive at the naked truth, presented to the eyes of Constantinople by an actress that became an empress, in the decline of a State overthrown by a powerful invader.

among

among its choicest virtues, humility and meekness, graces rarely to be found associated with prosperous industry. Examine the lives and conversation of tradesmen, shopkeepers, farmers, graziers, the lesser manufacturers, and of so many others immediately above the labouring class. It is dreadful to observe an habitual neglect of religion, and even a spirit of infidelity gradually creeping in among them. These I must chiefly attribute to the taint of French principles, so incessantly infused by the publications of the day, which, favoured in its progress by the neglect of the clergy, and the ill example of the higher classes, has been suffered to diffuse itself, to the undoubted weakening of the honest principles and sober lives of preceding periods*. If any man thinks that such an effect does not essentially weaken our government also, in one of its strongest holds, and that the mischievous effects of prosperity will not thus descend in pernicious influence to the lower

* " Every where we may actually trace the effects of increasing wealth and luxury, in banishing, one by one, the habits, and new modelling the phraseology of stricter times; and in diffusing throughout the middle ranks, those relaxed morals and dissipated manners, which were formerly confined to the higher classes of society." *Practical View of Professed Christians*, 3d edit. p. 376.—Is it conceivable, that in this descent, the mischief will stop with the middle classes, and that the poison will not find its way to the lowest?

classes,

classes, and thereby essentially weaken the whole fabric of our government, he must have reasons for his opinion that utterly escape my observation.

Affliction, misfortune, and misery, are favourable to religious sentiments in the human heart, and have been the means of bringing many sinners to repentance. It is not inconsistent with just reasoning, to assign a contrary effect to so opposite a spectacle of prosperity and enjoyment.

But whatever the cause may be, to which the evil is attributed, if there is one circumstance more dangerous to the State than another, in the present situation of this country, I conceive it to be a false security—*Citius venit periculum cum contemnitur*—trusting that all is sound in the public mind—that right reason pervades the kingdom; and that because content ought to distinguish our people from all others, therefore they *are* contented—I have had long experience in the world to little purpose, if such reliances are safe. We have seen things happen that were little expected. We have stood aghast at unlooked-for mutinies, and seen them revive against all common sense. Let us not be too secure. When our all is at stake, no precautions can be too great; and as the obedience and affection of the people to their government must be exactly in proportion to their moral character and religious principles, a government which does not
exert

exert every nerve to improve these, while the enemy attempts to deceive and destroy both of them with unheard of energy, and is seconded by many in our very bosoms—courts a danger that cannot cease. In such circumstances, an idea of safety may be the precursor of destruction.

I have in a former paper * stated the national danger in the present eventful crisis, and called on such of my countrymen, whose property is sufficient to bear the expence, forthwith to arm †: but the impulse of government, uni-

* *National Danger, and the Means of Safety.*

† Let our governors, let every man in the kingdom, that does not look forward to anarchy with pleasure, reflect on the consequence of opposing the arms of France by a mere regular army, instead of rising in a mass, and opposing torrent to torrent. Wherever that faithless foe has prevailed, she has had only an army to fight with—never a people. What man, that carries the heart of a man in his bosom, can bear, without indignation, to see the idling crowds that fill all public places—to see Bond-street thronged with loungers, at such a moment as this? What husband can think of the wife of his bosom, what father view his helpless infants, what christian resort to the temple of his God, without reflecting, that life, and liberty, and religion, are at stake? to be decided perhaps, and fall before a relentless foe, if a battle or two be lost; while millions of able men remain unarmed and uncalled for, the mere spectators of their own and their country's destruction; men numerous, brave, and rich enough to have armed and fought in the defence of all that is

2

dear

versally given, is wanting for such an effect ; and the circumstance of no such impulse being attempted, may lead us to suppose that our rulers think it unnecessary. But in a moment when all the governments of Europe have been so dreadfully deceived—when they have all fallen, or are fast sinking into nothing, our own only excepted—all suffering from a fatal and lethargic security—when so many countries have been overrun and conquered, which would at this hour have remained free and independent, had they been armed and ready to repel attack—I see no reason to change the opinion I presumed to publish ; but on the contrary, I am fully persuaded, that if the most vigorous measures of every kind, included within the idea of arming the bodies, and enlightening the minds of the people, be not taken, this happy country will fall with the rest ; and what is more, it will merit that ruin which the providence of the Almighty (connecting, in the common course of nature, negligence with misfortune) may permit as the natural consequence of our misplaced security.

dear to humanity ; able, had they been led to action, to have annihilated at once the invaders of their country ; or, should the first efforts of these invaders be successful, to have harassed them by never ceasing attacks, and thus have destroyed them even by the effects of their own victories.

I am

I am glad to find that authors have not declined inserting prayers in their pamphlets—let me copy a good example, and offer up to the Father of Mercies a short and simple supplication.

Permit us, O Lord! to ask thy protection on our country in this time of national danger. Grant this nation increase of grace, to hear meekly thy word, and to receive it with pure affection, that it may bring forth the fruits of the spirit in general repentance and amendment; and thus deserve the blessing of thy protection upon our religion, liberties and laws. Secure us from the hostility of foreign invaders, and from the plots of domestic foes, that we may continue quietly governed under our excellent institutions, and in the enjoyment of the blessings which thy good providence granted to our fathers. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I am, dear Sir,

With every sentiment of gratitude
and respect,

&c. &c.

A. YOUNG.

London, Feb. 25, 1798.

FINIS.

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